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Governor Donald L. Carcieri
Office of the Governor
222 State House
Providence, RI 02903

March 5, 2003

Dear Governor Carcieri,

In response to the disturbing news about Governor Jeb Bush breaking up the Florida State Library, the drastic cuts proposed in the governor's biennial budget in Washington State, the sudden closure of three branches in Springfield, Massachusetts, and the proposed budget cuts in the New York City Library system, I feel it urgent to tell you how important the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) means to me as a professional and a citizen of Rhode Island.

I have been a librarian for twenty-six years, graduating from URI's Graduate School of Library and Information Services in 1976. I have been employed in numerous public, school and academic libraries throughout the state. In every one of my positions as librarian, I could not have done my job as well as I did if it were not for OLIS.

OLIS sets the standard by which all libraries should perform. These standards are not without a knowledge or unique understanding of Rhode Island in general and R.I. libraries in particular. Barbara Weaver and now Anne Parent, have provided leadership to the librarians in the public and school libraries in 39 cities and towns, the academic librarians in eleven institutions of higher education, and special librarians in the fields of medicine, business and law. They, along with the entire staff at OLIS, have provided local support and connectivity to the world beyond our library's walls.

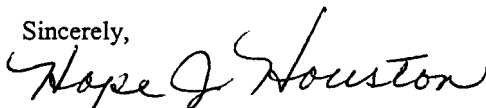
OLIS's support comes in the form of summer reading programs for Rhode Island's children and continuing education workshops for library staff; in providing funding for literacy projects for preschoolers and resource sharing initiatives to schools; in services for the disabled and the elderly and statewide interlibrary loan delivery service to libraries. But you know all this.

Are you also aware of the personal support given to the librarians of Rhode Island by the OLIS staff? Frank Iacono is the librarian's librarian, providing excellent reference service to those librarians who are new to the field and to veterans like me. Donna Longo DiMichele and her staff work tirelessly to bring many types of librarians together to plan ways to better serve all our residents. The OLIS webpage keeps us informed of everything from statewide happenings to the latest legislation that may have an impact on libraries. There are many more at OLIS who deserve our praise and support.

Rhode Islander's love their libraries. Please know that the service we have all come to expect from OLIS is not something we are willing to sacrifice. The new book delivered to the local library in a day or two for the voracious mystery reader, the story hour or reading program given each week to excited preschoolers, or the descriptive video for a visually impaired patron living alone could not happen if it were not for OLIS. While the residents of Rhode Island may not be aware that OLIS provides these services, you and I do.

Anne Parent just informed the library world that you are recommending a bottom line of 25% in state aid for public libraries for 2004. This is great news. Now it is time for the General Assembly to know that OLIS is a true Rhode Island treasure.

Sincerely,



Hope J. Houston
Head of Reference Services
Johnson & Wales University Library